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INFO RUEH2L/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RUEHFL/AMCONSUL FLORENCE IMMEDIATE 3953  
RUEHMIL/AMCONSUL MILAN IMMEDIATE 0393  
RUEHNP/AMCONSUL NAPLES IMMEDIATE 4177

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ROME 000001

SIPDIS

EO 12958 DECL: 01/01/2020  
TAGS PREL, PGOV, PINR, IT

SUBJECT: VISITING WITH A RECUPERATING BERLUSCONI

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Classified By: Ambassador David H. Thorne. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. C) Summary: The Ambassador visited recuperating Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi at his Lombardy estate for a private luncheon December 30.

The Recuperating Prime Minister

¶2. C) Following the Ambassador's call to Gianni Letta suggesting the Ambassador visit the Prime Minister during his recuperation, Letta, the t

¶3. C) Berlusconi was still bandaged and scarred from the assault in early December where a mentally unstable man hurled a die cast model of Mi

U.S.-Italy: A Prized Relationship

¶4. C) In luncheon discussions, Berlusconi unabashedly stated that he prized Italy's relationship with the U.S. and that his government stood r

Berlusconi on European Leaders

¶5. C) The Prime Minister and Letta also gave their run down of current European political leadership. Berlusconi assessed that Sarkozy's star

Iran: Appalled by violence, Will try to rope in ENI

¶6. C) On Iran, Berlusconi noted that he was appalled by the Iranian crackdown. He offered the capabilities of the Italian intelligence service

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already excellent bilateral cooperation on the issue. Letta also promised that he would talk to ENI CEO Scaroni about the energy giant's ongoi

Megaports - GOI to determine POC

¶7. C) In response to the U.S. request to move forward on Megaports, Letta told the Ambassador that the issue would be discussed at the Council

Italy's Courts - Problem Number One

¶8. C) Berlusconi forthrightly identified the magistratura - Italy's judiciary and courts -- as Italy's "biggest problem" and told the Ambassac

Smart Guys in the Opposition

¶9. C) Berlusconi and Letta displayed a great deal of respect for opposition leaders. Berlusconi praised the Democratic Party Leader, Pier Luigi

Worried about a flat 2010

¶10. C) Both Berlusconi and Letta expressed concern about the limited prospects for economic growth in 2010. Berlusconi thought that Italy had

New Media - Important for Liberty

¶11. C) In response to the Ambassador's questions to the Prime Minister about the role of the internet, Berlusconi shot back "it's important fc

The Berlusconi Leadership Academy

¶12. C) The Prime Minister commenced the visit by personally

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conducting a guided tour of his most recent project, a private academy to train Italy's brightest young minds. Berlusconi led Letta and the Amk

Comment

¶13. C) The Ambassador's intimate afternoon with Italy's two top decision makers was both a testament to the priority Berlusconi gives the U.S.